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CARE OF WOODS

Furniture cannot stand forgotten after the pores of the wood have been filled and the surface polished. The wood needs to be fed with oil occasionally to keep it from drying out. A certain amount of moisture in the air is necessary to woods, also, and if the air of a room becomes too dry in a heated house in winter it is not good for the furniture. When the moisture in the wood dries out, the parts become loose, the wood shrinks, cracks, and veneering may loosen.

Daily and occasional care of fine furniture will help to keep the wood in good condition. The formula for an oil finish, to use in restoring old furniture, is also good for a polish to use at least once or twice a year on varnished and oiled furniture. It is simply a mixture of two parts of boiled linseed oil and one part turpentine. The oil feeds the wood. The turpentine loosens the dirt and helps the oil to penetrate the wood. This polish removes the dull foggy appearance often noticed on furniture in daily use and, if the surface has fine checks on it, they will show less after polishing. Apply the mixture with a soft cloth. Wipe off all excess polish with a clean cloth and then polish by rubbing briskly with the grain of the wood until the fingers leave no mark and the surface is thoroughly dry.

To clean the arms of a much used chair or parts of a table, make a mixture consisting of 1 quart of hot water, 3 tablespoons of boiled

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linseed oil and 1 tablespoon of turpentine. Keep hot in a double boiler while using. First wash the wood with a soft cloth dipped in the solution, then polish with a dry cloth. Then go over the piece with furniture polish.

A waxed surface may be cleaned by first washing it with turpentine, then rewaxing. You can make your own furniture wax by melting a quarter pound of pure beeswax in a double boiler. When slightly cool, add a pint of spirits of turpentine and stir until it is like a thick batter. Put in a jar to use as needed. Adding a little boiled linseed oil will make the wax waterproof. Adding burnt umber color will give a good color for lighter woods and jet or ivory black for darker ones. The wax should be colored so that it will not leave a light film on the surface.

To restore a varnished surface which has turned white from water or hot dishes, rub lightly with a piece of flannel dampened with spirits of camphor, essence of peppermint, or a drop or two of ammonia. The milky film that develops on a varnished surface in a damp climate is often impossible to remove. If an oil rub does not help it may be necessary to refinish the piece.

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